



PROCUREMENT NEWS AND NOTES

On-Line Vendors List. The State Procurement Bureau (SPB) has made an on-line vendors list available on the GSD website at:

<http://www.discoveringmontana.com/doa/gsd/olbl/default.asp>.

The list currently contains nearly 5,000 vendors organized into 52 major categories with 428 specific quote groups. The vendor information was derived from the PeopleSoft/SABHRS vendor tables, manual additions of new vendor information received by SPB, and vendor information merged into the database from other agencies.

Specific information is provided for each vendor, including address, phone and fax numbers, and a listing of each quote group in which that vendor has identified an interest. E-mail addresses are being included for each new vendor added to the list, although this information was not collected in the original PeopleSoft vendor module. Corrections to the current vendor information are being added as they are received.

Agencies should use this vendors list now for all of their solicitation needs. If you would like to have other vendors added, please contact Bonny Belling at 444-3322. This new service will be demonstrated at the upcoming Purchasing User Group meeting on April 22, 2004, in the DPHHS auditorium from 1 to 4 p.m.

The on-line Purchasing Vendors List represents the first step in a much more ambitious project. SPB has enlisted the services of the Department of Administration's Information Technology Services Division and Montana Interactive to develop a self-service vendor site, where vendors will be able to add, edit, and even delete their own

information. In addition, the online vendor site will be interconnected to the current "One Stop" website at:

<http://www.discoveringmontana.com/doa/GSD/osbs/Default.asp>. Vendors will then receive automatic e-mail notification of any bids or requests for proposals that are posted to the one stop site that meet their identified areas of interest. Any questions or comments concerning this project should be directed to Hank Voderberg at hvoderberg@state.mt.us.

Procurement Legislation. The General Services Division is considering a piece of legislation that will amend some portions of the Montana Procurement Act. Highlights include plans to exempt "grants" from the Act; remove the limitation on the amount for which a letter of credit can be submitted for contract security; permit the use of reverse auctions as a new procurement method; permit bidders to protect bona-fide trade secrets from public inspection; and to clean-up some language in the RFP statute. If anyone has additional suggestions for modification, please contact Sheryl Olson at 444-3315.

Year-End is Approaching! Agencies are reminded that all FY04 requisitions must be received at the State Procurement Bureau by May 1, 2004, so that all purchase orders and contracts can be completed no later than June 30, 2004. If agencies need to encumber funds as a FY04 purchase, the entire purchasing process must be complete by this date.

Medical Supply Contract. Agencies that are currently using the MMCAP contract with Physician Sales and Services, should be aware that a second medical supply contract with McKesson has now been added. For more information, contact Sheryl Olson at 444-3315.

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Keep Thinking Green. Agencies are encouraged to continue thinking "green" when making purchasing decisions. Montana has received some public recognition for having policies or laws in place that encourage and promote green purchasing. The Center for a New American Dream lists states and local governments that have initiated environmental purchasing approaches. The New Dream website contains a variety of helpful resource materials and articles to assist agencies in getting started in implementing green purchasing programs:

<http://www.newdream.org/procure/policy/index.html>.

Document Formatting Reminder. Bid and proposal document drafts submitted to the SPB for issuance must use the Arial font and cannot use the automatic numbering or table of contents generation features. SPB staff will read, proof and revise specifications in consultation with agency procurement staff to ensure document quality and readability.

PUBLIC VEHICLE FUELING

Have We Been Busy! The Vehicle Fueling Program continues to grow by leaps and bounds. Recent additions to the program include Montana Tech of the UofM, Miles Community College, Dawson Community College, Three Forks Area Ambulance, Fairfield School District, East Glacier Park Volunteer Fire Department, York Fire Service Area and the Sheriff's Departments in Hill, Pondera, Chouteau and Gallatin counties. For information on the Vehicle Fueling Program, please contact Tom Gustin at (406) 444-3312, e-mail tgustin@state.mt.us.

DATES FOR BSPPA ANNUAL MEETING

The annual Big Sky Public Purchasing Association's meeting will be held October 13-15 at the GranTree Inn in Bozeman. For more information, contact Penny Moon at 444-3313.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT NEWS AND NOTES

Recycle Montana (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). During calendar year 2003, state employees in the Helena area recycled materials that diverted over 360 tons of materials from area landfills. This helped recycle 28 tons more than last year making this the eighth consecutive year of breaking old records and setting new standards. If you have questions about the Recycle Montana program or want to get more actively involved, contact Bill Covey at 444-9520 or e-mail bcovey@state.mt.us.

Need for More Electrical and Gas Savings. With the rising cost of electricity and natural gas, it is critical that state government continue to conserve energy and identify even more reduction measures throughout the various agencies and buildings. The price increases of 2003 will require state agencies to further implement and improve on the already great progress that has been. Please contact Clay White at 444-3060 with any questions or suggestions for further conservation measures.

ON THE LEGAL FRONT

In July of 2003, a hearings officer denied the protest of Reier Broadcasting Company against Montana State University over the award of a contract for broadcasting rights for MSU athletic events. The hearing officer's recommendation was adopted in February 2004 by MSU President Dr. Geoffrey Gamble after oral arguments by both sides. Reier has since appealed the decision to district court, on the grounds that, among other things, President Gamble was not an impartial decision maker and, therefore, Reier's constitutional right of due process was violated. This will be the first procurement protest case heard in a Montana district court since the protest law was adopted in 1997. For information on this case, contact Sheryl Olson at 444-3315.

PROPERTY AND SUPPLY BUREAU

New Central Stores Catalogs Available! The new Central Stores catalogs are out. If anyone did not receive one or needs extras, please call Brenda Job at 495-6004.

PRINT AND MAIL SERVICES NEWS AND NOTES

Mail Workshop Coming this Fall! Print and Mail Services is organizing a mail workshop in Helena this fall in conjunction with the United States Postal Service (USPS). The workshop will be provided free of charge to state employees by marketing staff from the USPS. Topics covered will be mail design, postal requirements, and direct mail promotion. If there are any other specific topics you would like to see presented, please contact Leona Olsen at 444-3881 and we will plan accordingly. The time and location of the workshop will be announced at a later date for any employees who would like to attend.

Direct Mail. Direct mail continues to be one of the most cost effective means to communicate to your customers. Print and Mail Services can help you present your message and show cost savings in postage. State programs continue to rely on direct mail, so do not hesitate to call us at 444-3050 for help with your project.

PURCHASING CARD

How Many Purchasing Cards? When determining which employees, especially travelers, are issued the State's purchasing card, agencies should consider whether an employee's purchasing card use is sporadic, seasonal, or intermittent. If so, the card may be temporarily suspended, with reactivation requiring only a 24-hour notice to GE Capital from the applicable purchasing card program administrator. In making this decision, agencies should be aware that monthly card fees were eliminated October 1, 2003, and the controls for each card are highly customizable. Managers may specify the single purchase limit, daily purchase limit, monthly (cycle) purchase limit, number of transactions per day, number of transactions per cycle, and specific merchant category codes where the card may be accepted. Some agencies choose to have only one individual with a purchasing card in an entire office. In some cases, especially when arranging for travel, the practice may not work or may even result in unpleasant complications for the traveler that is without an individual card.

Delta Airlines, in some instances, may require the traveler to present to the ticket agent the purchasing card that was used to purchase the ticket or the passenger may not be allowed to board the aircraft. This practice is used to alleviate credit card fraud and may come into play for last minute ticket purchases, i.e., tickets purchased less than 7-10 days prior to

departure. Certain hotels have required the card to be presented at the time of check in. These situations may be further complicated by the fact that many airline flights depart before the beginning of a business day and assistance from agency personnel may be impossible if problems are encountered on a Saturday stay over.

New Air Travel Web Page. The Department of Administration recently launched an air travel web page to assist agencies in maximizing the value of their airfare dollar. Based on a legislative audit study that recommended improving the knowledge and understanding of the types of airfare products available, the web page will help agencies identify and obtain more cost-effective airfares. The web page contains valuable information for travelers, along with links to airline websites, special offers and links to various discount travel sites and is located at the following link: <http://www.discoveringmontana.com/doa/doatravel/airtravel/index.asp>.

Travel Policies Updated. The State Travel Policy, Chapter 0300 of the Montana Operations Manual, was recently updated. Effective July 1, 2004, agencies are required to use the State's purchasing card to purchase all airline tickets for individual employee travel. This applies to ticket purchases made through a travel agent, purchased directly from an airline, or purchased from an online travel source. In addition, the Transportation Purchase Order form and process has been eliminated. A link to the State Travel Policy is contained on the Department of Administration's travel page at:

<http://www.discoveringmontana.com/doa/doatravel/travelmain.asp>. For information on obtaining the State's purchasing card, please contact your agency purchasing card coordinator or Tom Gustin at 444-3312, e-mail tgustin@state.mt.us.

TERM CONTRACT UPDATES

Duplicating Supplies. A new term contract has been issued for Duplicating Supplies for the contract period of March 1, 2004, through February 28, 2006. Items in Groups 1, 3, and 4 were awarded to Finished Documents, Inc. Items in Groups 2, and 5 through 15 were awarded to A. B. Dick Company. This is an "exclusive" term contract, which means if the items are on the contract, they must be purchased from the contract holder. The Term Contract is available on the GSD website. Please contact Jeanne Wolf at 444-7210 or jwolf@state.mt.us if you have questions.

Agricultural Chemicals. A new term contract has been issued for Agricultural Chemicals for the contract period of March 1, 2004, through February 28, 2005.

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QUESTION OF THE QUARTER

“One of our RFP evaluation committees, in the interest of saving time, got together in advance of the scheduled evaluation committee meeting to come up with a committee score for the proposals they were evaluating. They were planning on just presenting their scores as a committee to the procurement officer at the scheduled evaluation meeting. Is there any problem with doing it this way?”

Yes, this is a problem. While finding ways to save time is a great idea, we can't shortchange the public's right to be present when RFPs are evaluated. Ever since the 1998 Montana Supreme Court decision regarding the public's right to observe the evaluation of a RFP proposal, we have required that RFP evaluation committee meetings be electronically posted. While individual committee members should always have reviewed the proposals ahead of the scheduled meeting, there can be no discussion among committee members of their anticipated scoring of the proposals until the actual scheduled meeting.

SURPLUS PROPERTY NEWS AND NOTES

Spring Auction. The State's Spring Auction is scheduled for Saturday, May 22, 2004, in Helena. All items must be at the Property and Supply Bureau yard no later than Friday, April 23, to meet the auction deadlines. Please ensure that titles are available for all vehicles going to auction. Call Mark Athearn at (406) 444-6016 for further details.

THINK ABOUT IT

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world: indeed it's the only thing that ever has!

Margaret Mead

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The contract was awarded to Billings Farm and Ranch Supply, Inc., of Billings, Montana. This is a "non-exclusive" term contract, which means agencies may obtain these products from sources other than the contract holder as long as they comply with Title 18, MCA, and their delegation agreement.

The State Procurement Bureau promotes the use of "Integrated Pest Management." According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "Integrated Pest Management" (IPM) is the coordinated use of pest and environmental information with available pest control methods to prevent unacceptable levels of pest damage by the most economical means and with the least possible hazard to people, property, and the environment. Therefore, agencies are urged to consider the least hazardous method available when making decisions regarding the use of agricultural chemicals. More information on IPM is available on the EPA's website at the following address:

<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/food/ipm.htm>. Montana State University (Bozeman) also hosts a website for the Montana Pesticide Education Program at <http://mtpesticides.org/> that contains a wide variety of information concerning pesticides. Please contact Jeanne Wolf at 444-7210 or jwolf@state.mt.us if you have questions.

Lab Chemicals and Supplies. A decision has been made to renew this contract for an additional year. The current contract holders are Fisher Scientific and VWR Scientific and both companies offer a wide variety of chemicals and supplies routinely used by the State and University System. For more information, contact Penny Moon at 444-3313.

PURCHASING USERS GROUP

The next meeting of the Purchasing Users Group will be Thursday, April 22, 2004, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Public Health and Human Services Auditorium, 111 North Sanders in Helena. The summer meeting is currently scheduled for Thursday, July 22, 2004, at the same time and location.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

"GSD Update" is published quarterly by the General Services Division of the Montana Department of Administration. For more information, or to get on the mailing list, contact us at (406) 444-2575. Our address is: P.O. Box 200135, Helena, MT 59620-0135. Fax number: (406) 444-2529. Website address: www.discoveringmontana.com/doa/gsd.